



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Halts Effort to Return Navy to Cecil Field: Says Quality of Life for Residents More Important

Jacksonville, Fla. Oct. 20, 2005 – Mayor John Peyton announced today that he has told Governor Bush, members of Jacksonville's Congressional delegation, Base Closure and Realignment Commission Chairman Anthony Principi and members of the Jacksonville City Council that he will halt efforts to return Cecil Field to its former status as a Naval aviation facility.

"The feedback I've received in recent weeks makes it clear that the community does not want the master jet base to return, and I respect that," said Peyton. "I did my job by making sure we had the chance to consider a great economic opportunity. But at the end of the day, the quality of life for residents of the Westside is the most important thing. What I have heard from these citizens has weighed increasingly on my thinking."

The mayor reminded the community of the significant gains the city experienced as a result of the BRAC process. "It's important to remember that, exclusive of Cecil Field, over 2,700 men and women will call Jacksonville home as a result of the BRAC commission's actions," he said. "This makes us a significant "gainer" community in the process, and these patriots will find a warm welcome here."

Peyton reminded the community that the BRAC commission, in its attempt to provide a master jet base with less encroachment than that which currently exists around NAS Oceana, ended up pitting two communities against each other and set up a virtual bidding war for naval assets. He said, "This isn't fair to us or to Virginia, but it's the hand we were dealt in August by the BRAC. We've all been uncomfortable with the limbo this has created, and it's time to turn our attention back to other issues that are important to the citizens of Jacksonville."

Peyton reaffirmed his personal belief that returning Cecil Field to its former status as the Navy's East Coast master jet base would be enormously positive for the city's economy, but stated that community concerns and the uncertain outcome of the effort over a period of many months dictated putting an end to the effort.

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